

From Oliver P. Hay
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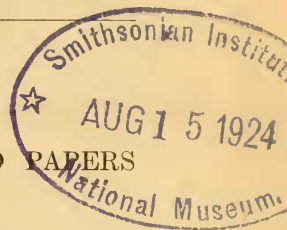
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

ON THE STATUS OF PRIVATELY ISSUED PAPERS
ON SYSTEMATIC ZOOLOGY.

BY OLIVER P. HAY.

In the Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, volume XXXVI, 1923, on pages 1 to 6, Prof. H. F. Osborn published an article entitled Publication Standards in Vertebrate Palaeontology. This paper contained many excellent suggestions on the subject; also the opinions of a number of systematists whom all naturalists hold in high honor. Nevertheless, regarding the proposition which constitutes the core of the communication, namely that "privately published" descriptions of species and genera are not valid, there are so many statements only partially true and so many conclusions inadequately supported that the article is extremely misleading.

It has been the fortune of the writer to be long associated with many systematic writers on biological subjects, and his experience leads him to wonder how Professor Osborn happened to secure only the opinions of men who favor his own view. Of all systematic writers in Washington, for example, the writer knows of only one who adheres to Professor Osborn's view of the validity of privately issued papers. To get at the root of the matter, it may be said that for nearly 200 years naturalists, striving to reach unanimity of procedure in nomenclature and publication, have adopted several codes of rules; and to these codes authors have conformed more or less closely, some not without reluctance. Now, in not one of these codes has it been prescribed exactly how one must bring his discoveries to the notice of his colleagues; not one that he shall, instead of being his own publisher, his own donor or vendor, put a price on his product and employ a broker to distribute it.



The solicited opinions published by Professor Osborn are the personal views of good men. They doubtless have their influence on the methods of publication, but probably not much on the recognition of papers after they are issued; and when anybody states that it is essential that a certain number of hundreds of copies of a paper shall be distributed, he speaks for himself alone.

It is stated by Professor Osborn that privately issued brochures and books are without precedent. Quite the contrary. Without going outside of our own country or outside of palaeozoology, one finds, for example, a paper of four pages on fossil crustaceans by A. W. Vogdes; another of 18 pages on fossil crinoids by James Hall; one of 36 pages on geology and fossil corals by Yandell and Shumard. Professor Osborn has told us how many papers on *Proboscidea* he has consulted, all of which conform to his ideas of propriety; but *Proboscidea* are not the only organisms that have been described. Were there only a motive and not so many more important things to do, the writer would undertake to collect, in the various branches of zoology and botany, a hundred papers which would fall under Professor Osborn's ban.

Professor Osborn refers to the despair caused to editors, proof readers, and succeeding generations of systematists by Cope in publishing on two occasions specific names in the explanation of plates. These, we are told, seem to be glaring exceptions to an otherwise regular practice. This statement appears to put the stamp of approval on what are known as Cope's Palaeontological Bulletins. These, as found collected in book-form in some libraries, are what a systematist might call a heterogeneous assemblage. Some are simple reprints issued in advance of appearance in a scientific journal; others are papers which were later reprinted in some journal; still others are productions or copies of them that never appeared in any scientific periodical. Thirty of these bulletins are before me. Apparently not one of the first seventeen announces either a publisher or the place of publication; only one indicates an address at which a purchaser may apply to the author; none has any price put on it. The first thirteen and some of the others had no common title, the name "Palaeontological Bulletin" being first applied to No. 14. Some of them are without date of issue. The writer

has found copies of the earlier bulletins which did not have the serial numbers printed on them. It is possible therefore that the original bulletins did not have these numbers. Although the first nine bulletins were some months afterward reprinted in the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Cope expressly denied that the originals had been read before that society. These statements apply likewise to Bulletin No. 12, in which appeared descriptions and names of various new species.

The first edition of each of the first nine bulletins did not exceed 100 copies; in some cases not 50 copies (Pal. Bull. No. 13, p. 5). It is possible that copies of the first edition of these are in existence; but the writer has not been able to find any in the libraries at Washington. These early productions were as purely privately issued papers as can be imagined, hastily prepared, and intended to serve as caveats. If not "privately published" papers, a new definition of this expression is needed. If the bulletins as a whole are regarded as a serial of "a high and uniform standard," this characterization requires further exegesis.

Privately printed and issued papers are recognized as valid by nearly all systematic workers in America and probably also abroad, even though these papers do not conform to Professor Osborn's standards. Naturally we may suppose that Professor Cope endorsed their validity; likewise Professor Marsh. Between Cope and Marsh there was a contention regarding the correctness of the dates of Cope's early bulletins. How inconsiderate it was for Professor Marsh to dispute with his rival about these dates when he might have returned the leaflets to Cope with the declaration that the crude productions had no scientific standing anyhow.

How American naturalists have regarded such independent publications may be learned from Dr. Wm. H. Dall's report (Proc. Amer. Assoc. Adv. Sci., vol. XXVI, 1877, p. 19). On a vote to exclude these papers from recognition the count stood: "No, 21; desirable, but impracticable, 10; yes, 14."

For more than 25 years it has been the practice of zoologists and palaeontologists of the American Museum of Natural History to recognize the validity of privately issued systematic papers. Dr. J. A. Allen was one of the great authorities of the

world on matters of zoological nomenclature and publications. He showed his evaluation of privately printed and distributed publications when, by a two-page leaflet, without name of publisher and without price, he was anticipated in naming a new species of reindeer; and he accepted his disappointment in the spirit of a good loser. In the department of vertebrate palaeontology it has been the usage for more than 30 years, to accept as authoritative papers thus published. As early as 1891 (Proc. Phila. Acad. Nat. Sci., 1891, p. 111) Charles Earle quoted Cope's bulletins Nos. 7 and 11. In 1908 (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. XXIV, pp. 221-264) Walter Granger cited Cope's bulletins Nos. 2, 3, 12, and 17 as accepted media for publication of new names. Dr. W. D. Matthew has so often and so consistently recognized Cope's bulletins as valid papers that only two citations will be made. One of these belongs to the year 1901 (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. XIV, p. 24); the other to 1909 (Mem. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. I, pp. 299, 300, 552).

In 1892 (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. XVI, pp. 172-175) Professor Osborn quoted as original references for new species Cope's bulletins Nos. 1, 3, 8. In July, 1919 (Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc. vol. LVIII, pp. 386-396) Osborn and Mook published a paper on *Camarasaurus*, in which, on their page 387, they say that Cope published the original description of this reptile August 23, 1877. This description constituted pages 5 to 10 of Cope's Palaeontological Bulletin No. 25. This part of that bulletin was never reprinted, although portions of it were incorporated into other papers. As in other cases, this bulletin announces no printer, no publisher, no place of publication, no address of author, no price. The writer has no intention to censure the authors here mentioned for their recognition of Cope's bulletins. Their action was natural and proper. It appears, however, that the opinion now supported by Professor Osborn presents a marked contrast with his 30 years of practice.